United Nations A/72/PV.8

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-second session

8th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 20 September 2017, 12.05 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Rajaonarimampianina Rakotoarimanana (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Address by Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ouattara (*spoke in French*): I would first like to express my condolences to the Mexican Government and people after the earthquake.

I wish to express the gratitude of the Ivorian people for the great mobilization of countries gathered here that elected Côte d'Ivoire to the Security Council for the term 2018-2019. That election demonstrates, if that were necessary, the Assembly's support for my country's ongoing commitment to peace and dialogue.

It is also a call to share with the the Assembly and the world our experience in managing the emergence from a crisis and in effective cooperation with the United Nations, as evidenced by the success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. That peacekeeping operation, with its lessons learned, has been acknowledged by all as one of the few peacekeeping successes of our global Organization in the past few decades. It should serve as inspiration to the United Nations in its peace initiatives. That is why Côte d'Ivoire, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council — which status was just conferred by the Assembly — intends to promote fair and pragmatic compromises in the settlement of crises on the Council's agenda.

In a world experiencing severe geopolitical turbulence and climate change, the theme of our session, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet", is a call to action to strengthen peace in the world. We must conceive of a development model that is better balanced among the countries and more just among people. This theme us an urgent challenge to save our planet so that we can build the virtuous world we want for ourselves and for future generations.

From the discussions we held with all countries as we sought to promote our candidacy for the Security Council, we noted that there is an urgent need to respond to new global threats in order to achieve a lasting peace for all. More than ever before, it is time to act and to fulfil our commitments, so as to meet the expectations of our peoples with regard to security and development.

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Since 2001, the global counter-terrorism architecture that our Organization set up has become considerably stronger in terms of law and the coordination of international action. Despite those encouraging developments, and the success of anti-terrorist operations by major Powers and their allies in the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, in Africa, the world is struggling to find a satisfactory collective response to terrorism. Under such conditions, those important successes will be in vain and the terrorist threat will remain a source of concern if Africa continues to be the weak link in the global fight against terrorism.

The major Powers must intensify their commitment to combating terrorism in Africa and must provide greater support to the efforts of the continent and the United Nations. We call for support for the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), whose work is essential for the security of a large part of the African continent. For its part, Côte d'Ivoire will make support for the G5 Sahel and fighting terrorism in Africa one of the priorities during its term on the Security Council, since without stability there can be no development.

Global warming is a real concern. No country is immune to the devastating effects of climate phenomena, which are jeopardizing our countries' peoples and economies. We must therefore act quickly and responsibly if we are to preserve our environment and our planet.

With regard to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, my Government will live up to its signing of it and will seek, inter alia, energy transitions, the development of smart agriculture and the preservation and protection of the environment. It is urgent that every country, like Côte d'Ivoire, uphold its commitments voluntarily agreed to under the Paris Climate Agreement. In the same vein, developed countries must honour their commitments to finance the adaptation of the economies of the countries in the South to the impact of global warming. We must also be sensitive to the plight of many small island States. We must consider climate change a real threat to international peace and security. We must urgently take the right steps, including by adopting an international pact for the environment, which has been proposed by France.

Maintaining peace and security in the world also requires strict management of the issue of nuclear weapons. We must do our utmost within the Security Council to find a peaceful solution to the serious nuclear tensions in the Korean peninsula. Any use of nuclear weapons in that region would demonstrate the moral bankruptcy of our civilization and the end of the era we are living in. It would run the risk of a nuclear conflict with unforeseeable consequences. I therefore call on the major Powers to show restraint and to enter into dialogue with North Korea, in order to create the conditions for a lasting de-escalation and to reassure the world with regard to maintaining peace and stability in that region.

All efforts to combat illegal immigration and human trafficking and smuggling have not put an end to those phenomena, which continue to engulf thousands of young people from African countries in the Mediterranean. On the contrary, they have contributed to the weakening of democracy and a rise of extremist feelings, even in established Western democracies.

To put an end to those dangerous migrations, developed countries, in particular countries and regions that receive migrants, must mobilize investments and resources needed to finance development in migrants' countries of origin and transit so that their economies are able to offer jobs and opportunities to their youth. The fight against people smugglers in countries of origin should also be intensified. Furthermore, the international community must put an end to the war in Libya and dismantle terrorist groups and smugglers' networks that continue to traffic in human beings.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the response to this scourge is focused on prevention by increasing awareness and assistance with return for those who attempt migration, as well as dismantling smuggling networks. The fight against illegal migration must respect existing international legal obligations that guarantee respect for the human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all migrants.

Building a peaceful and secure world remains our priority. Despite a difficult economic situation marked by a sudden drop in the price of cocoa, Côte d'Ivoire intends to honour its commitments in the framework of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of its priority development goals, Côte d'Ivoire has reached an average annual growth rate of 9 per cent per year over the past five years, thanks to sound macroeconomic policy, the work of Ivoirians, an improved business environment and significant investment.

We are now working to effectively distribute the fruit of that growth, particularly to the most destitute and the most vulnerable segments, all while seeking to transform the country. That is the essence of the 2016-2020 national development programme and of the bold social reforms led by my Government. I would like to make an urgent appeal to all States and civil society organizations so that the international mobilization for the implementation of the SDGs does not fade. Developed nations must honour their commitments by contributing to financing for development in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the third International Conference on Financing for Development.

We must face the fact that the individual and, above all, collective responses of our countries to the main security challenges of our time are insufficient, even if we have achieved significant results in the fight against terrorism in certain theatres. The fact of the matter is that our world is vulnerable and no State can face the global threat alone. The rise of terrorism, the devastating effects of global warming and the persistence of nuclear tension, particularly in the Korean peninsula, have sorely tested our collective security architecture. We must therefore agree on the ways to strengthen and modernize it so as to enable our countries to respond jointly and effectively to the serious threats of our times.

We must also afford pride of place to conflict prevention in order to spare our people the exorbitant human and material cost of war. In that connection, I welcome the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, which will allow both institutions to work together closely during all stages of the cycle of conflict in a predictable, systematic and strategic manner.

Our Organization is at an important turning point in its history. It is facing significant challenges in the carrying out of its mission. It is therefore timely for my country to pledge its full support for the reforms called for by Secretary-General António Guterres, and to renew our faith in him. His reforms are steps in the right direction. They ought to be pursued in that same spirit, with the support of all countries. Côte d'Ivoire is ready to write a new page in its history at the United Nations after its election to the Security Council, thanks to the support of all. We must continue to work together in the interest of our Organization in order to advance the priority causes of our peoples.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine.

Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Poroshenko: On behalf of Ukraine, I sincerely congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. Ukraine fully supports all six priorities for the upcoming session defined by him and is ready to assist him in his noble efforts.

A lot must be done to translate our common vision of a peaceful, prosperous and equal world into reality. The spiral of violence continues to affect more and more countries and regions. Transnational terrorism, the use of force in international relations, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the refugee crisis, poverty, human rights violations and environmental fragility are only some of the challenges we face. The scope of the threats demands our joint and resolute response. It is time to act, and we have a very narrow window of opportunity to avoid an irreversible decline.

The United Nations should be at the forefront of this process. Ukraine has always advocated for the need to reform the Organization to meet the most urgent global challenges in a timely and adequate manner. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, since the first day of his mandate, to develop and implement a robust and comprehensive United Nations reform agenda. We support no less the United States initiative to promote an effective and meaningful

reform of the United Nations. Comprehensive reform of the Security Council is long overdue, and we hope that this session will herald new momentum in the intergovernmental negotiations on the blueprint for the Security Council reform.

Let me take this opportunity to state clearly that we in Ukraine could not agree more with the call for the sovereignty of nations to be universally respected and guaranteed. That very conclusion was timely and rightly raised yesterday from this rostrum. When the United Nations was set up, it was designed to maintain peace and security in the world, based on the principle of respect for the sovereignty of States and the integrity of their borders. The founding nations, including Ukraine, aimed to secure a world where the sovereign rights of free choice would be respected. The five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5) were to safeguard that principle in the name of sustainable peace and security. That was the principle that one of the P-5 member States so blatantly violated against my own country. This principle needs to be put back on track using whatever means and tools we have at hand. Ukraine is the right place to invest in that noble endeavour, in the name of sustainable peace and security.

That is what millions of Ukrainians have struggled for since the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014 in both Donbas and Crimea. A three-year-long war with Russia has resulted in 10,000 people killed and 7 per cent of Ukrainian territory occupied, and 20 per cent of the Ukrainian economy and industrial output has been seized, destroyed or simply stolen.

However, the most horrific thing in this situation is that the Kremlin has consciously chosen the tactics of increasing human suffering. According to human rights activists, the occupied Crimean peninsula has turned into a territory of repression. Anyone disagreeing with the Kremlin risks their freedom, and even their life. Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars get arrested even for posting in social networks or — as was case of the Crimean farmer Volodymyr Balukh, in December 2016 — just for putting a Ukrainian national flag on his private residence.

Persecution of the leaders of the Mejlis — the representative organ of Crimean Tatars, whose activities the Russian occupiers banned — continues. Only a week ago, Ahtem Chiygoz, Deputy Head of the Mejlis, was sentenced to eight years in prison for standing up against the Russian occupation. Another Deputy Head of the Mejlis, Ilmi Umerov, who has a serious health problem, remains under house arrest, not even allowed to leave Crimea for medical treatment.

Russia blatantly violates resolution 71/205, entitled "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)". It keeps ignoring all requests of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure proper and full access of the international human rights monitoring mission to Crimea. The Kremlin pays no respect to the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice imposed on it. The Court urged Russia to refrain from maintaining or imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions, including the Mejlis, and to ensure the right for Ukrainian citizens to study in the Ukrainian language.

The international community must give a proper response to such Russian disregard of its international obligations. It must keep a close eye on Crimea to prevent a new genocide inspired by the modern proponents of Stalin's totalitarian ideology against the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. I rely on the support of delegations here for Ukraine's initiatives to ensure the observance of human rights in the temporarily occupied Crimea, in particular in a further General Assembly resolution.

We need to strengthen the international regime of de-occupation of Crimea. The fact that at the highest international level — the General Assembly — Russia was recognized as an occupying Power proves that we are on the absolutely right track. The time has come to establish a new international group of friends of Ukrainian Crimea to coordinate and promote our common steps. We count on the coordinated and targeted support of our international partners.

The militarization of Crimea is another security threat that affects the whole of Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as North Africa and the Middle East. Ukraine strongly condemns the numerous military exercises conducted in occupied Crimea, as well as those close to the borders of Ukraine, in particular that known as West-2017. Together with our neighbours and partners, we urge Russia to ensure full compliance with its commitments under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Vienna Document and other international rules concerning military activity.

The security and human rights situations in Donbas remain no less dramatic than in Crimea. This year, Ukraine initiated three major ceasefire attempts — the Easter, Harvest and Back-to-School ceasefires. Yet again, Russian occupation troops and their proxies violated them almost immediately. In breach of the Minsk agreements, Russia keeps its regular military in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and continues to supply heavy weapons and ammunition to the occupation troops. It flatly denies the establishment of the OSCE permanent control over the Ukraine-Russia border, and the release of hostages within the Minsk process is completely deadlocked.

The list of Ukrainian hostages in Donbas grows constantly. People are captured deliberately. Their only fault is that they have a pro-Ukrainian position. We remember the fate of 16-year-old Stepan Chubenko, who was killed with five shots in the head after Russians saw him wearing a Ukrainian ribbon. Another example is the 63-year-old Donetsk theologian Ihor Kozlovsky, who has been in jail for over two years under false accusations and deprived of any communication with his family and friends. Russia still keeps at least 16 Ukrainian political prisoners on its territory. Ukrainian film director Oleh Sentsov and Ukrainian journalist Roman Suschenko are among the most prominent cases.

Just think about it. Stealing other nations' land, kidnapping people, conducting a hidden war, downing a civilian aircraft, spreading lies globally — is this the kind of behaviour we expect from a permanent member of the Security Council? Russia is not a contributor to international security, but its biggest threat. Russia is perhaps the only country in the world that has conflicts — hot, frozen or potential — with almost all its neighbours.

The key problem in Donbas is that Ukraine and Russia strive for completely different things. Ukraine wants peace and restoration of sovereignty over its territory. Russia wants control over Ukraine and undermines every effort to restore our sovereign control within Ukraine's borders. To that end, Russia tries to exchange peace in Ukraine for Ukraine's freedom. I want to utter a very strong message — Ukraine will never accept that kind of a deal, nor will the international community.The latest hybrid peacekeeping proposals from Moscow are yet another example of Russia's real ambitions: to legalize its proxies and to freeze the conflict forever.

We would welcome any proposal that would bring peace to my country. We remain convinced that a full-fledged United Nations peacekeeping operation is the only viable solution to de-escalate, to protect people of Ukraine and to get us closer to a political solution. That is why the peacekeepers' mandate should cover the entire occupied area, including the Ukrainian-Russian State border. That is the must. As long as the border is used as the main supply route for manpower and weapons to Donbas, there will be no peace in my country.

The mission should respect basic United Nations peacekeeping principles and guidelines. One of them is that United Nations peacekeepers should be impartial. There is no place for the aggressor's personnel. They cannot be a part of it by definition. Let me stress that any abuse of the United Nations peacekeeping toolbox to secure the gains of aggression is absolutely unacceptable. If we have an opportunity to bring peace to the heart of Europe, we should get the conditions right. A robust international presence can also help us cope with the increase in terrorist activities in the conflict-affected areas. The terrorist component in Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine is clearly visible and has become a reality of everyday life in Donbas.

Three years ago, the world was stunned when Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, with 298 people on board, was blown up in the skies over Donbas. Ukraine is determined to do everything to bring to justice those responsible for that mass murder. Two investigations, technical and criminal, have been carried out. Both revealed the details. Those who were behind that horrible crime came from Russia. The missile came from Russia. The death of the MH-17 victims is on Russia's conscience. The five countries that comprise the Joint Investigation Team have decided to prosecute those responsible for downing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 within the Dutch judicial system.

This year, the International Court of Justice started hearing the case brought by Ukraine against Russia for the violation of the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and we hope that the decision of the United Nations highest court will help bring the Russian Federation to justice for its numerous violations of international law and for financing crimes committed since 2014. As the process begins, we count on the support and facilitation of all States Members of the United Nations.

For decades, Ukraine has served as a resolute contributor to global security. In the name of peace and in exchange for security assurances, Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal — the third-largest in the world. Twenty years after being invaded by one of those who were bound to respect and, if necessary, to protect Ukraine's border, we neverthless remain a resolute advocate of global non-proliferation and disarmament.

That is why we strongly condemn the nuclear tests and multiple launches of ballistic missiles by North Korea. We are deeply concerned about the continuous diversion of resources from critical human needs to fuel Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal, coupled with serious human rights abuses. We resolutely stand for reinforced measures to stop Pyongyang's illegal activities and to bring North Korea into line with the international legal framework. At the same time, let me reiterate Ukraine's call on the Security Council to undertake an in-depth investigation into developments in the North Korean nuclear and missiles programme in order to expose any possible foreign assistant to Pyongyang in that area.

We also express our deepest concern over the current situation in Syria. We believe that the full implementation of and adherence to the word and spirit of the 2012 Geneva communiqué (A/66/865, annex) and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) are absolutely vital for the settlement of the conflict in that country. What draws our special concern with regard to that bloody conflict is Russia's use of occupied Crimea as a military outpost for projecting power in Syria. As the war there rages on, a huge number of Russian military assets are deployed to Syria by ships based in the Crimean harbour.

It is also deeply disturbing that the African continent continues to suffer from numerous unresolved conflicts. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, my country has spared no effort to support the African continent in safeguarding the main principles of the international order: sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, the rule of law and peaceful settlement of disputes.

As the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, we have actively supported regional and international efforts to stabilize the situation in the Central African Republic. In January 2017, Ukraine assumed the chairmanship of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, and we are determined to contribute to the international efforts to resolve the conflict in Darfur. African countries can fully count on Ukraine as their reliable friend.

My country is fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite heavy defence expenses — more than 5 per cent of our gross domestic product — Ukraine continues to go through a fundamental transformation, fighting corruption, promoting judicial reform, implementing decentralization and improving business opportunities. A year and a half ago, the economic situation in Ukraine was so dire that we could only dream about macroeconomic stabilization. Now we have grounds to say that economic recovery is in place. Among our priorities within the 2030 Development Agenda in Ukraine are such areas as ensuring a sustainable energy supply, food security, promoting innovation, development and sustainable infrastructure, as well as promoting an effective public health system, affordable education and decent work.

I am convinced that no country alone can achieve sustainable development without sustainable peace and sustainable security. There is also no doubt that the mitigation of global warming remains an indispensable element of sustainable development. I am proud that Ukraine is fully committed to our obligations under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Our intentions in that regard are very serious. Ukraine was the first European country to deposit its instrument of ratification with the United Nations.

The United Nations has always played a leading role in ensuring that the crimes of the past can never happen again. The seventy-second session of the General Assembly coincides with the eighty-fifth anniversary of one of the deadliest crimes of the twentieth century — the Holodomor. It was a man-made famine in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933, organized by the totalitarian regime of Stalin, which killed from 7 million to 10 million Ukrainians. Mr. Raphael Lemkin, the author of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, described the destruction of the Ukrainian nation as a classic example of genocide. I appeal to all United Nations States Members to make their own historic judgment and to make a decision to recognize the Holodomor as an act of genocide.

This is a challenging time for all of us. Ever more people die in wars and natural disasters. Truth is blindsided by post-truth. The world is divided again between those who believe that freedom is indispensable and those who believe that freedom is expendable. One group wants to reach a better future, the other drags us to the past. It is time for those who believe in freedom to come together. It is time for freedom to be strong, convincing and convinced. Let it be that way.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Ukraine for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Abbas (*spoke in Arabic*): Twenty-four years have passed since the signing of the Oslo Accords, an interim agreement that set a five-year period for bringing an end to the Israeli occupation, giving hope to the Palestinian people that they would soon achieve independence within their State and peace between Palestinians and Israelis. What is left of that hope today? We recognized the State of Israel within the 1967 borders, but Israel's continued refusal to do the same has called into question the mutual recognition that we signed in Oslo in 1993.

Since my address to the Assembly last year (see A/71/PV.14), when I urged us to make 2017 the year for ending the Israeli occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine, the Israeli Government has relentlessly pursued its settlement campaign on our land, in contravention of all international conventions and the relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine. It has also persisted in its flagrant disregard for reaching a two-State solution, resorting to delaying policies and tactics and devising pretexts to evade its responsibility for ending its occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine. Instead of addressing the underlying issues and resolving the root causes of the conflict, it has tried to divert international attention to secondary issues that in fact are caused by its colonial policies.

While we continue to call — as does the international community — for an end to the Israeli occupation of our State's territory, Israel incites trouble and makes false accusations, pretends that there is no Palestinian partner and imposes unreasonable, obstructive conditions. Israel is well aware, as we all are, that its occupation breeds provocations and violence. Its military occupation of our land has now lasted for more than half a century.

Ten years ago, in a decision made by the United States, we agreed together to establish a tripartite committee to address the issue of incitement, made up of the United States, Palestine and Israel. The committee worked for some time but was eventually disbanded, and since then we have called for its revival, to no avail. Who is committing incitement now? And who is trying to maintain it? It is therefore very strange to hear some of those who should be responsible for ending the occupation refer to it as a half-occupation, or an alleged occupation.

What is meant by "alleged occupation"? For 50 years we have languished under the yoke of occupation, and now someone who is responsible says that this is an alleged occupation. That is unfair, wrong and unacceptable. Israel's continuation of the occupation is an affront to the international community. The United Nations has a legal, political, moral and humanitarian obligation to end it and enable the Palestinian people to live in freedom and prosperity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital and within the 4 June 1967 borders. That is the responsibility of the United Nations and the international community.

There can be no doubt that draining the quagmire of the colonial occupation of our land and ending its unjust, oppressive and illegal practices against our people would have an enormous effect on the fight against terrorism, thereby depriving terrorist groups of one of the key rallying cries they exploit to promote their obscurantist ideas. We therefore reiterate that it is vitally urgent to end the Israeli occupation of our land, since it is an integral part of the efforts that we must

all make to confront such groups. Palestinians oppose all internal and international terrorist organizations, whatever their nature, origins or character. We stand against international terrorism and we are fighting it.

We have explored every avenue and exerted enormous efforts to achieve peace with our Israeli neighbours. Together with other Arab and Islamic States, we have adopted the invaluable Arab Peace Initiative, aimed at resolving the Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflict. The Initiative states that upon Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and Arab territories — the Golan and Shaba'a farmlands — occupied since 1967, the Arab and Islamic States will recognize Israel and normalize relations with it. What has been the Israeli response? Fifty-seven Arab and Islamic States have said that they are ready to recognize and normalize relations with Israel, but Israel is not interested.

In 2003, there was also the 2003 Quartet road map for an Israeli-Palestinian peace, endorsed by the Security Council and accepted by Palestine. It, too, was rejected by the Israeli Government — so apparently Israel is above the law. Next, a French-led initiative for peace attempted to break the stalemate in the peace process and ensure a successful effort to salvage the peace process and a two-State solution. It led to the convening earlier this year in Paris of the Conference for Peace in the Middle East, which was attended by 70 States and four international organizations. Israel has rejected and boycotted all of those efforts. Besides those I have already mentioned, President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Xi Jinping of China have also launched initiatives for peace. The latest of those peace efforts — all of which we are grateful for — is being led by United States President Donald Trump. Where are those initiatives and why will Israel not accept them?

For our part, we have also repeatedly tried to revive the peace process. We have called on the Israeli Prime Minister simply to affirm his commitment to a two-State solution and sit with us at the negotiation table to delineate the borders between Israel and the State of Palestine in order to open a path for meaningful talks on resolving all the other final status issues. Unfortunately, he rejected that offer. We have continued our genuine efforts to achieve a successful peace process, and Israel nonetheless continues to ignore its commitments and obstruct those efforts through its relentless settlement activities. There is no place left for the State of Palestine, and that is unacceptable both to us and to those here in this Hall. The fact is that Israel is rejecting a two-State solution, posing a real threat to Israelis and Palestinians alike. We will therefore be compelled to undertake a comprehensive strategic review of the entire process.

A commitment to peace by one side is never enough to achieve peace. Either we are free or not free. We have issued warnings in the past, and continue to do so today, about the Israeli policies aimed at entrenching the occupation and colonial facts on the ground in East Jerusalem. We have pointed out that those policies fuel religious animosity and could lead to a violent religious conflict. We have called on the Israeli Government to uphold the historic and legal status quo of the city's holy sites. However, since its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, the Israeli Government has repeatedly and unilaterally annexed Jerusalem. Jerusalem is occupied. It also decided to annex Golan, and did so. We rejected that at the time and continue to do so, together with the entier international community, including the Security Council.

The Security Council, the principal world authority on peace and security, has adopted numerous resolutions stating that such annexation processes are illegal. To whom should we turn? Since the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions are not being implemented, to whom should we turn? We have not chosen a path of terrorism or violence. Jerusalem is an occupied city. Israel's decisions and practices there are null and void and entirely illegal. The same applies to all the Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Israel's attempts to change the historic status quo in Al-Quds and particularly the status and integrity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque can be described only as playing with fire and an infringement on our responsibilities and those of our brother country Jordan. We are both responsible for the city. We have warned the Israeli Government about the implications of such an act of aggression and will hold it fully responsible for the consequences. We do not desire a religious war, which would be dangerous for everyone. Our conflict is political, not religious, so let us leave religious issues out of the equation.

Despite the ongoing occupation and its oppressive policies and practices, we have been working effectively to build the institutions of our State, which has been recognized by a majority — 138 of those present — of the States Members of the United Nations. I would like

to take this opportunity to once again thank all of the countries that have recognized the State of Palestine and have voted for upgrading its status at the United Nations. That is certainly helping to remedy the historic injustice that has befallen our people and showing support for the goal of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East and around the world.

I also stressed in my address to the Assembly last year that the status quo in the occupied territory of the State of Palestine is unsustainable. However, since the situation has only deteriorated, owing to Israel's insistence on pursuing its occupation, aggressive policies and unending violations of international law, we must once again call on Israel, as the occupying Power, to fully respect and uphold all the obligations that its occupation implies and bear the consequences.

We cannot continue to be an Authority that has no authority or to allow the occupation to continue at no cost. We are fast approaching that point. If Israel does not want a two-State solution, if it does not want peace, let it assume its responsibilities and bear their consequences, because we will not bear those responsibilities for them. Today a two-State solution is in jeopardy. As Palestinians, we cannot stand still in the face of that threat, which is targeting our national, political and social existence on our land and endangering regional and international peace and security. We will have to take steps or look for alternatives in order to preserve our national existence and maintain the prospects for peace and security. But any option we try will be peaceful.

In such a situation, we have the right to seek alternatives that preserve our rights and protect our land and our people from a hardening system of the type of apartheid that ended in South Africa long ago but that continues to persist in Palestine. Is that acceptable? Can the world accept an apartheid regime in the twenty-first century in Palestine? Why, then, is there one?

On the other hand, we have called on the International Criminal Court, which is our right. If nobody wants to listen to us, then we will pursue all avenues to justice. We have called on the International Criminal Court to open an investigation and prosecute Israeli officials for their involvement in settlement activities and aggressions against our people. We will continue to pursue our accessions to international conventions, protocols and organizations, as Palestine has acquired observer status pursuant to resolution 67/19 of 2012. I will convene the Palestinian National Council in the near future to operationalize a strategic review of these efforts.

The President took the Chair.

Palestinians, Arabs and the world as a whole have a choice as to whether to respect international law and implement the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. We will give the efforts being undertaken by President Donald Trump, the Quartet and the international community at large every chance to succeed so that a historic agreement or deal may be reached. We have heard that they are trying to strike a historic deal. We would like to thank them and hope that it will come to fruition soon.

We stress the two-State solution, which would enable the State of Palestine to live side-by-side with the State of Israel in security and peace. But if the two-State solution were to be fall apart due to the establishment of a one-State reality with two systems — a system of apartheid — following the unchecked imposition of the occupation that our people and the international community reject, that would be a failure, and neither the international community nor we will have any other choice but to continue the struggle and demand full and equal rights for all inhabitants of historic Palestine. This is not a threat, but we are warning Israel of the realities and the consequences of its ongoing policies that are gravely undermining the two-State solution. What do the Israelis want? Even if they talk about other issues, we continue to choose the two-State solution.

Our problem is with the Israeli colonial occupation, not with Judaism as a religion. Judaism for us Palestinians, be they Christian or Muslim, will never be considered a threat. It is an Abrahamic religion, like Islam and Christianity. God Almighty tells us in the Qur'an that, in the name of God the Compassionate and the Merciful, we should not distinguish between his messengers. Indeed, all His messengers — Mohammed, Jesus and others — are equal. All these religions are equal, and we do not make distinctions between prophets or messengers. On this occasion, we congratulate the Jews on their new year. We would also like to congratulate Muslims for their new Hijri year starting tomorrow. This is proof of our desire for a rapprochement among religions.

We have dutifully upheld our responsibilities towards our people in the Gaza Strip despite the split with Hamas that has been in place since 2007. Since that

time, we have provided all forms of support on our own to our people in Gaza, who are gravely suffering from the cruel Israeli blockade. We have repeatedly affirmed that no one is more aware of the interests of our people in Gaza Strip than we are. We are eager to see to the interests of the people in Gaza served. We have said that there will be no State in Gaza alone and there will be no Palestinian State without the Gaza Strip. A State in Gaza alone is a false dream, and our State will be complete only when the Gaza Strip is part of it.

I must express my relief at the agreement reached in Cairo as a result of Egyptian efforts. We are grateful for those efforts aimed at nullifying the measures taken by Hamas following the split with us, including the formation of a Government. The Hamas Government has been cancelled, and there is now a commitment to the National Unity Government, which is a Government of national consensus, which will enable it to exercise its authority in the Gaza Strip and allow for general elections to be held. This agreement has met with our satisfaction. Next week, our Government is going to the Gaza Strip to assume its responsibilities. We wish the Government every success.

In my address to the General Assembly last year, I appealed to the Government of the United Kingdom to rectify the grave injustice it inflicted upon the Palestinian people when, in 1917, it issued the Balfour Declaration, promising Jews a national homeland in Palestine, despite the fact that Palestine was inhabited by the Palestinian people. Some 97 per cent of the population of Palestine at that time were Palestinians, who were disregarded. Again, Palestine at that time was inhabited by the Palestinian people and was among the most progressive and prosperous countries in the region. It should not have been colonized or placed under the mandate of a great Power. The British Government has not taken a single step to date to correct this historical injustice against our people. It should apologize, provide us with reparations and recognize the State of Palestine. We talked to its representatives at length and so far they have not provided a response. What is even worse is that in November they want to celebrate the centenary of this crime against our people.

The silence of the international community with respect to Israel's aggressive policies has emboldened the country to continue its policies. I would remind the Assembly that, since its establishment, Israel has violated numerous provisions of international law. It has violated the Charter of the United Nations and continues to do so. It has violated General Assembly resolutions 181 (II), 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 242 (1967). We would recall that Article 42 of the Charter of the United Nations provides for the possible use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. This could apply to those who conduct acts of aggression against the land of others.

Israel has taken a large part of our territory and was not deterred from doing so by the United Nations. Resolution 194 (III) provided for the return of refugees at that time. However, the United Nations did not adopt any follow-up resolution. Security Council resolutions have called for withdrawal from the occupied territories. Where are those resolutions? If the United Nations cannot implement its resolutions, who will? Israel does not want to. Is Israel above the law? There are double standards in dealing with different countries. That is the Assembly's responsibility.

To salvage the peace process and the two-State solution, I urge the Organization and its Member States to adopt the following measures.

First, they should actively pursue efforts to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the State of Palestine within a set time frame. It is no longer enough to issue generic statements calling for the end to the occupation and the achievement of peace without a deadline. Efforts must be made to implement the Arab Peace Initiative, including a just solution for the Palestinian refugee question, in accordance with resolution 194 (III). The Arab Peace Initiative addressed the issue of refugees very well in referring to a just and agreed-upon solution, not one imposed upon a certain party, in accordance with resolution 194 (III). Israel disregarded those resolutions, riding roughshod over them. To whom should we complain?

Second, they should act to bring to a halt to all settlement activities in occupied Palestinian land, as demanded in numerous United Nations resolutions, including the most recent Security Council resolution, 2334 (2016), in addition to the operative paragraphs of the Fourth Geneva Convention. An occupying Power should not expel the people from their land. This is in the text of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Who is responsible for implementing those texts? Israel refuses to do so. What is the international community doing?

Third, the Organization and Member States should ensure international protection to the lands and people of the State of Palestine until the occupation ends,

as we are unable to provide protection to our people. Given all the forces, the arms that we are facing every day, who will protect us if the Member States do not? Many times we have put forward draft resolutions, but they are in vain.

Fourth, they should demand that Israel endorse and commit to the borders of 1967 as the basis for the two-State solution and set such borders in line with international resolutions. Once we delineate the borders, each party can act in its territory as it pleases without affecting or damaging the rights of the other party. Israel builds wherever it wants today, demolishing houses every day; even schools and hospitals are being demolished. Nobody raises an eyebrow.

Fifth, I must ask all the Member States of the United Nations that have recognized Israel to state that they have recognized Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders, thereby aligning themselves with international resolutions and reaffirming their commitment to those resolutions — even those who recognized Israel on the basis of resolution 181 (II). Resolution 181 (II) was violated. Hence my question: where are the borders of Israel that Member States are recognizing? How can Member States recognize a State that has no borders? Israel has not even decided on its own borders. Yet international law states that a State is a land with borders. But Israel has no borders. How can one recognize a State that has no clearly demarcated borders?

Sixth, I call on all States to end all forms of direct and indirect involvement with, and support to, the illegal Israeli colonial settlement regime on the land of the occupied State of Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the affirmed positions of States in that regard. Such action would be similar to the international community's approach to the apartheid regime in South Africa. We should not deal with settlements. We should not condone settlements. The black list of countries that are dealing illegally with Israeli settlements should be exposed.

Seventh, I urge those States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so. I do not understand how recognizing the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders harms the chances of peace. There could be minor amendments agreed between the two parties, but the basis is 1967, so our borders are well known. Where are the borders of Israel? How can recognizing the State of Palestine harm the chances of peace, especially since we Palestinians have recognized the State of Israel within the 1967 borders?

Eighth, we look to the Security Council to approve our application for full membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations. What do we lack? What is missing? Every day we prove that we are eligible for such status. All those who support the two-State solution should recognize two States, not one State — Palestine and Israel. If a Member State recognizes Israel, it should recognize Palestine.

Ninth, we urge the international community to continue providing economic and financial support to the Palestinian people to achieve self-reliance. If the occupation ends we will say "thank you". We will be self-reliant. Unfortunately, because we are under occupation, we can only seek assistance, and we are grateful to the international community because it is providing assistance. Help us to rid ourselves of the occupation, and we will thank Member States for their help.

We also urge the international community to continue providing support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to enable it to continue providing humanitarian assistance. In that connection, we warn against attempts to eliminate item 7 on the agenda of the Human Rights Council, or to change the mandate of UNRWA.

Efforts are also under way to obstruct the issuance of the list of companies operating in Israeli settlements. That is a black list. Why should we hide that list? It is similar to terrorism. Everybody should see the list to know who violates international law and who respects such law.

Tenth, we once again affirm our commitment to respecting human rights and international conventions, and to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and all other treaties and conventions that we have acceded to. We respect everything that we have acceded to or adopted, and we go hand in hand with the international community, of which we are part of.

The State of Palestine will reflect those imperatives, where appropriate, in the draft resolutions to be presented to the General Assembly. We call on the Assembly to vote in favour of those draft resolutions, with the clear aim of preserving the two-State solution,

salvaging and promoting peace and achieving security and stability and prosperity for both Israelis and Palestinians and for the people of the entire region.

In conclusion, allow me to salute our great people, who remain steadfast in their homeland despite their suffering and peaceful struggle against foreign occupation. The culture of peace is prevailing among Palestinians. Those joining Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front are not from Palestine.

I salute our people of Jerusalem, who exhibited one of the most shining examples of peaceful popular resistance against the Israeli colonial occupation. When they were prevented from praying, they prayed outside — they prayed and were victorious. I salute our people in exile and in the diaspora. I salute our people who remain steadfast in the West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip. I salute our glorious martyrs and our courageous prisoners in Israeli prisons.

I tell them all that freedom is coming and is inevitable and that the occupation will come to an end. That will come about either with the independence of the State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel on the 1967 borders, or, if Israel chooses, with equal rights for all of the inhabitants of the land of historic Palestine from the river to the sea. Which will they accept?

When South Africa was liberated from the apartheid regime, Nelson Mandela said that he was grateful to the whole world and the United Nations, which contributed to and supported the end of apartheid in South Africa. Mandela added that their victory would not be complete until the Palestinian people were victorious. We, together with the Assembly, are entrusted to end the apartheid in Palestine — person by person, State by State, including the super-Powers. All of us should stand together. It is a commitment that should be fulfilled. Will the Assembly fulfil its duty? I very much hope so.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the State of Palestine for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council

The President: The Assembly will hear a statement by the President of the European Council.

Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Tusk (European Council): The European Union (EU) stands for freedom and a credible rules-based global order, because that order is a real sine qua non condition for peace, stability and a global economy that works for everyone. An alternative to that order is chaos, which always encourages violence, egoism and extremism.

The United Nations is the best tool we have to address, on a global scale, today's conflicts, famine, forced displacement, terrorism and a return to nuclear tensions. For the EU and its member States, it is imperative that the United Nations rise to those challenges. That is why, together, we contribute approximately one third of United Nations core financing, make one third of United Nations peacekeeping contributions and put in half of all voluntary contributions to United Nations funds and programmes.

However, we also expect the United Nations to become a more energetic and a less bureaucratic Organization that can act with clarity and purpose in all its actions. Therefore, the EU considers the ideas for reforming the United Nations currently on the table as the necessary minimum. What is needed is more ambition, not less.

The United Nations remains a vital forum for debate and a tool to implement our collective will, even if it has declined in popular esteem in recent years. I take the action by the Security Council on 11 September (see S/PV.8042) to sanction North Korea for carrying out more nuclear testing as a sign that the capacity for real leadership and unity is present. Nevertheless, it is still too little. No country should be allowed to undermine the global non-proliferation regime or to threaten peaceful countries. Together with Japan and South

Korea, our close friends and strategic partners, the European Union calls for a peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We also call on all concerned to uphold the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran as a multilateral deal that is delivering more security for us all.

Europe also wants to work in partnership with African countries on challenges ranging from security and counter-terrorism to economic growth and job creation. We look forward to advancing those goals together at the African-European summit in Ivory Coast at the end of November. The European Union is already cooperating closely with United Nations missions on peacekeeping and conflict prevention in Mali, the Central African Republic and other conflict zones.

We are also doing our best to alleviate a major humanitarian crisis, affecting more than 20 million people, in the Lake Chad basin, South Sudan and Somalia. Yet more needs to be done. Now is the time to wake up to those escalating situations before it is really too late.

When it comes to the global refugee crisis, the EU continues to assume its responsibility by receiving people in need of protection and by assisting host countries closer to the conflict zones. For three years now, the EU has appealed to the international community to take up its responsibility for refugee protection and irregular migration. I am doing the same today. In that context, the European Union is actively supporting the United Nations process to develop global compacts for refugees and for regular, safe and orderly migration. The engagement of Member States is needed right now, both in terms of money for humanitarian assistance and more resettlement for those displaced by conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and especially across Africa.

At the same time, we should crack down on human smugglers, who exploit vulnerable people and violate sovereign borders. I welcome that the International Criminal Court Prosecutor is investigating the smugglers in Libya for crimes against humanity. We should treat them, via a system of international sanctions, just as harshly as those engaged in terrorism and piracy. The European Union calls on international agencies to increase their presence on the ground in Libya immediately, so that we can work to improve the situation of those victimized by the smugglers.

The year 2017 showed us that Da'esh as a territorial entity is fated for defeat, which is good news. Sadly, however, repeated terrorist attacks, including in Europe, demonstrate that the threat continues. We need to keep on strengthening the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism. In short, we must be more determined than they are.

Doing more on counter-radicalization within the United Nations is badly needed. We welcome the establishment by the industry of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism to work in tandem with United Nations structures. The European Union has called on the major online companies to develop, as a priority, the means for automatic deletion of extremist content immediately after posting. To the Muslim leaders of the world, I repeat the appeal I made after the London Bridge attack in June: their strong stance against Islamist extremism will be a real support in the fight against terrorism.

Finally, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is the cornerstone of global efforts to tackle climate change in an effective way and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The EU remains determined to implement the Agreement swiftly and fully and to support our partners, in particular vulnerable countries, in the fight against climate change. We will work with all partners that share our conviction that the Agreement is necessary to protect our planet, that it is fit for purpose and that, in turn, it is good for economic growth and future jobs.

We meet at a time when the world is poised between hope and fear. The global economy and trade are expanding, but security tensions are rising and global cooperation is being increasingly questioned. Making international action robust, credible and transformative is the challenge. The European Union will never give up working with and within the United Nations until we meet this challenge.

The European Union and the United Nations were created in answer to the atrocities of the Second World War. That is why our European priority will always be to react vigorously against evil, violence and lawlessness in international life. When confronting evil, the EU and the United Nations cannot hesitate.

In our political life there are situations that are black and white and are crystal clear, such as the case of North Korea's nuclear blackmail, terrorism, and the aggression on Ukraine. It is in such cases that we need to demonstrate that we are still able to distinguish between good and evil. Sometimes that takes courage,

but the United Nations is not there to cowardly look for a compromise with evil, but to mobilize the global community in the fight against it. Therefore a moral judgment of reality, clear and univocal, should be the first principle of our common action.

Many people in the world still believe that in this Hall have gathered those who have not given up on the ethical dimension of politics in the name of their own egoistic interests. Let us show them that their trust is justified.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the European Council for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Rutte (Netherlands): Every era and every decade has its problems, great and small. The problems we face now seem overwhelming. These days many people worry about the future, which is understandable. The past few years have been marked by terrorist attacks all over the world.

In countries like Myanmar, Syria, the Central African Republic and Yemen, the population is suffering as a result of wars and conflicts. More and more people are fleeing their homes because of violence, scarcity or poverty, leaving behind everything they have. Only recently, floods claimed lives in the United States and Asia, and Hurricane Irma has left a trail of destruction in its wake, including in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Nuclear issues are once again a major concern, and geopolitical tensions are increasing.

That is the picture today. But if we take a long-term perspective — and, as a historian, I like to do that — there are grounds for optimism. This building here in New York — United Nations Headquarters — is concrete proof that progress is possible. Here in this inviolable international zone, thousands of people from every continent work together to foster peace, justice and development in a world governed by international law. That is no easy task, far from it. But advances are being made. Sometimes we take three steps forward and two steps back, but if one takes a long-term view, one can see clear progress.

Think back to when the United Nations was established in 1945. Europe lay in ruins, as did Asia. Two nuclear bombs had been dropped on Japan. The Cold War was around the corner and would hold the world in its grip for decades. But the destruction caused by two world wars united the nations of the world in a shared belief that it should never happen again.Franklin D. Roosevelt put it this way in February 1945:

> "The point in history at which we stand is full of promise and of danger. The world will either move towards unity and widely shared prosperity or it will move apart".

The world of today is indeed a much better world, and not just geopolitically. In 2015 we took stock of the progress we had made on the Millennium Development Goals. Extreme poverty and maternal mortality had been halved, and child mortality had been almost halved. Ninety per cent of children in developing countries are now receiving primary education. Despite all the very real problems that confront us today, I still see grounds for optimism. We cannot change the world overnight, but we can improve the lives of individuals step by step. And we are doing so.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in those achievements. The United Nations is the only organization where everyone sits at the table, and remains there. While other institutions struggle with an increasing lack of credibility, faith in the added value of the United Nations remains strong among the world's citizens. We must not let them down.

The Netherlands and its Kingdom partners Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten have always attached great importance to cooperation within the United Nations. Our small, outward-looking kingdom could not exist without strong multilateral institutions and an effective international legal order. As a trading

nation, our prosperity depends on a stable world. And after the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 disaster and attacks in neighbouring countries, the people of the Netherlands are increasingly aware that our domestic security depends on cooperation with other countries. It is very important to the Netherlands and to the victims' next of kin that justice is seen to be done for those who perished on Flight MH-17. It has been agreed that the next step — the prosecution and trial of those responsible — will take place in the Netherlands. We are working with all the countries involved to make that possible.

The problems confronting today's world — climate change, migration, food security, terrorism and cybercrime — are by definition international. No single country can tackle them in isolation. We need each other. Instead of becoming more inward-looking, as united nations we need to take a step outwards. In this turbulent world, the importance of the United Nations is growing every day.

Next year, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will be even more focused on the United Nations. In January 2018, we begin our one-year term on the Security Council, taking over from Italy. This shared arrangement is a good example of European partnership within international organizations. We would like to see more such cooperation. Our two countries even share some of the same priorities, such as tackling people-smuggling in Libya, an issue that is of great concern to the whole of Europe.

For next year, as a temporary member of the Security Council, we have set three priorities: a strong United Nations and a secure and sustainable world. We will work in a transparent way to achieve that goal, each element of which is equally important.

The first priority, a strong United Nations, is essential. For that, reform and modernization are crucial. As the new Secretary-General, António Guterres, has said, "The onus falls on the United Nations to prove its worth". He has been active from day one, working to adapt the United Nations to new realities. His ambitious agenda inspires confidence for the future. The Kingdom of the Netherlands supports his vision and approach, and I would like to take this opportunity to call for a joint effort to implement his reform plans. It is time to follow through. And I do not only mean the Secretary-General, but all of us here in this great Hall. Saying that the onus falls on the United Nations means that the onus falls on us.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands wants to see a more effective and efficient United Nations, with better cooperation among the various agencies. After all, the fields in which the United Nations is active — human rights, peace and security, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — are all inextricably linked. The Netherlands already works in this way. We call it the 3-D approach: an integrated effort to tackle development, defence and diplomacy.

We would also like to see the role of the Resident Coordinator reinforced. Moreover, the United Nations will have to work in a results-oriented way, adopt a more modern personnel policy and bolster its internal transparency and accountability. Those are all issues that we will press for in the coming period.

Our second priority next year is of course security. The key word here is "prevention". We are not devoting enough attention to the early stages of conflict development. That has to change. We need an organization equipped and ready for action at all stages of conflict. That is already happening in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), in which the Netherlands is participating and will continue to participate in 2018. What is new is that we are using intelligence to carry out long-range reconnaissance missions. In that way, we can anticipate conflict, instead of waiting for it to come our way.

We see MINUSMA as a model for future missions. However, we need not only better intelligence, but also task-oriented training for United Nations personnel, high-grade equipment and a clear mandate. This year the Kingdom of the Netherlands is co-organizing the United Nations Peacekeeping Conference in Vancouver. There, we will press for rotation schedules to ensure timely deployment and rotation of both personnel and materiel. That will make countries more willing to participate and extend the potential lifespan of a mission.

Counter-terrorism is another issue on which the United Nations is rightly focusing more and more. After all, the United Nations is the prime forum for global norm-setting and international cooperation in the field. When it comes to preventing terrorism, cooperation is key. A good example of such cooperation is the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), which

the Netherlands co-chairs together with Morocco. There, 29 countries work together to achieve a single goal: to keep our citizens safe. It is producing concrete results. For instance, at least 60 countries and the United Nations now contribute foreign terrorist profiles to INTERPOL. INTERPOL already has over 16,000 profiles. When the GCTF was set up, it had fewer than 1,000. That work is not high profile — most of it goes on behind the scenes — but it saves many lives.

The prevention of violence and conflict ties in with our third priority — sustainability — and with it, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs precede everything I have just discussed. They are the ultimate prevention agenda. They address the drivers and root causes of instability and conflict. Investing in human dignity, eradicating poverty, fostering climate resilience and promoting economic and social progress will reduce the incidence of conflict, instability and despair — development and lasting peace, all in one package.

The Netherlands and its Kingdom partners Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten are working together to implement the SDGs. We believe that the key to success in attaining the Goals is our willingness to form partnerships at the national and international levels with businesses, civil society organizations, knowledge institutions, local authorities and youth organizations. Working together across sectors is part of our country's tradition.

Our most important area of expertise is water management. Much of the Netherlands lies below sea level, so we have centuries of experience in water technology, urban delta management and maritime technology, expertise that we are keen to share with the rest of the world. Working together on water issues is more crucial than ever before. Nearly five years have elapsed since thousands of people here in New York had to flee their homes when the streets flooded in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The destruction caused by Harvey in Texas and the floods in Asia show that water issues have only become more urgent in the last five years.

The impact of climate change on the water cycle is brought home to us every day, all over the world, sometimes violently. The people of Sint Maarten, in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, are struggling to cope with the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma.

The United Nations now predicts that 200 million people will have become displaced by 2050 because of climate change. Water therefore plays a key role in achieving almost all of the SDGs. We learn most by working with others and by sharing knowledge. We deploy our expertise all over the world — for example, in projects in Viet Nam, Peru, Myanmar and Bangladesh. That is one of the reasons that I am a member of the High-level Panel on Water.

This Hall, this building and all members of the Assembly represent one of the greatest achievements of humankind: all the nations working together in partnership to foster peace, justice and development in the world. This is a unique Organization, which entails a heavy responsibility. In such turbulent times, the United Nations needs to prove its worth more than ever. Adlai Stevenson, an American politician who experienced two world wars and died when the Cold War was at its height, once said,

> "The United Nations is like a spade; it is not self-operating. It is what we make of it, for purposes that we can find in common with our neighbours in the world."

I could not agree more. We face great problems in the present age. Conflict and natural disasters affect the lives of many and cause widespread concern. In this unstable world, the United Nations represents stability and a chance to shape the world for the good. We need to make progress with the reforms proposed by Secretary-General Guterres. Let us consider what we have achieved in recent decades. As they say, past results are no guarantee of future performance, but they do represent a promise for the future. Let us do all we can to make good on that promise, because together we can make the United Nations a success. In the year ahead, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will commit itself fully to that endeavour.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Abe (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text provided by the delegation*): I had intended to begin today by speaking of the sincerity with which Japan is implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and I hoped to introduce the innovative ways by which we have been fostering public awareness of those Goals within Japan. I wanted to explain why the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative is important to me personally and to the Government of Japan. I have been saying we will make universal health coverage part of the Japan brand, and in December we will hold a major conference in Tokyo with that theme.

The list of points I would have liked to raise here is long indeed — our contributions towards the rule of law, our determination to be steadfast in undertaking the Paris Agreement and our policy of addressing global infrastructure demand through quality investments. Moreover, what Japan wants to safeguard in every respect is the free, liberal, open international order and multilateral frameworks.

The world certainly holds high expectations towards the United Nations as the flag-bearer upholding those values. That is exactly why the Security Council should be reformed without delay, in response to the demands of the times. Japan will strive, together with its friends, to achieve such reforms. I had intended to state that Japan's abiding determination is to play an active role for world peace as a permanent member of the Security Council. However, I have no choice but to focus my remarks on a single issue, that of North Korea.

North Korea conducted a nuclear test on 3 September. Whether or not it was a hydrogen bomb test, its scale far exceeded that of previous tests. Before and after that, on 29 August and again on 15 September — before the ink was even dry on Security Council resolution 2375 (2017), adopted to impose sanctions on North Korea — North Korea launched missiles. They were launched to fly over Japan and make a display of their cruising range. The gravity of that threat is unprecedented, and it is indisputably a matter of urgency. North Korea is attempting to dismiss with a smirk the efforts towards disarmament we have assiduously undertaken over the years. The non-proliferation regime is about to suffer a serious blow from its most confident disrupter ever.

Qualitatively, that recent crisis is of an altogether different dimension than those we have eluded every time that some dictator has attempted to acquire weapons of mass destruction. North Korea's nuclear weapons either already are, or are on the verge of becoming, hydrogen bombs. Their means of delivery will sooner or later be intercontinental ballistic missile. Over more than 20 years since the end of the Cold War, where and when else, and to what dictators, have we allowed such self-indulgence? As it turns out, it is only towards North Korea that it has been allowed. That is the reality we find before us, and it was absolutely not a lack of dialogue that gave rise to the situation.

Dialogue dissuaded North Korea from pursuing its nuclear ambitions. Dialogue has afforded many of us the relief that the world had been saved from a crisis. Believing thus, many of us were relieved — not just once, but twice. The first time was in the early 1990s. At the time, the threat that North Korea imposed amounted to little more than openly displaying its withdrawal from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other inspection regimes. However, tensions were felt by those of us that surmised the intent of that.

After many twists and turns, in October 1994 what is known as the Agreed Framework was realized between the United States and North Korea. Under that framework, North Korea would be made to abandon its nuclear plans. In exchange, we would provide incentives to North Korea. To that end, Japan, the United States, and the Republic of Korea formed the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in March the following year.

Taking KEDO as the implementing agent, we pledged to build and hand over two light-water reactors to North Korea and to provide 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually as a stopgap measure for its energy demand. Those steps were all carried out accordingly. However, as time went by, it came to be known that North Korea had been continuing steadily with its uranium enrichment.

From the start, North Korea had never intended to abandon its nuclear ambitions. That had become readily apparent to all. After 2002, seven years after it was founded, KEDO suspended its operations. During that period, it can be said that North Korea defrauded the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan with

regard to assistance. Countries that recognized value in the KEDO framwork of providing incentives to change North Korea's actions gradually came to join KEDO: the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Chile, Argentina, Poland, the Czech Republic and Uzbekistan. North Korea betrayed the good faith of all those KEDO members. As one of the organization's founding members, Japan had pledged to give a non-interest loan to KEDO and had fulfilled roughly 40 per cent of that pledge — that is, about $400 million of a $1 billion pledge.

The second crisis occurred in 2002, when KEDO suspended its operations and North Korea, saying it would end the freeze on its nuclear-related facilities, expelled IAEA inspectors. The concern was again that North Korea was continuing its uranium enrichment — and again we chose the path of defusing the situation through dialogue.

North Korea, China, and Russia joined the three founding members of KEDO — Japan, the United States and the Republic of Korea — to launch the Six-Party Talks in August 2003. Subsequently, after two years of twists and turns through the summer of 2005 into autumn, the six parties finally reached an agreement resulting in the release of a joint statement. North Korea committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to returning to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards. Moreover, two years later, in February 2007, an agreement was concluded regarding what each of the six parties should do towards implementing the joint statement. A group of IAEA inspectors that had entered North Korea verified the shutdown of the nuclear-related facilities in Yongbyon, and in return North Korea received heavy fuel oil.

The series of events made people think that, this time, tenaciously continuing dialogue had finally caused North Korea to change its actions. But what actually happened? In February 2005, while the Six-Party Talks were under way, North Korea declared unilaterally that it was already in possession of nuclear weapons. Moreover, in October 2006, it openly carried out its first nuclear test. Its second nuclear test was in 2009. Finally, that same year, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Six-Party Talks, stating it would never again take part in such talks. It was around that time that it was firing ballistic missiles on a repeated basis.

Over the course of more than a decade, beginning in 1994, the international community continued its efforts for dialogue with North Korea with great perseverance, first through the Agreed Framework and later through the Six-Party Talks. However, what we had to learn is that during the time that dialogue continued, North Korea had no intention whatsoever of abandoning its nuclear or missile development. For North Korea, dialogue was instead the best means of deceiving us and buying time. More than anything else, the following fact demonstrates that. In 1994, North Korea had no nuclear weapons, and even its ballistic missile technology was far from mature. Yet it is now working to attain hydrogen bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Again and again, attempts to resolve issues through dialogue have all come to nought.

With what hope of success are we repeating the very same failure a third time? We must make North Korea abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile programmess in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. What is needed to do that is not dialogue, but pressure.

On 15 November, 40 years will have passed since a 13 year old girl named Megumi Yokota was abducted by North Korea. Megumi and many other abducted Japanese remain in North Korea even to this day. I will continue all possible efforts so they can set foot on Japan's soil as soon as possible. I will continue until the day when they will finally be in the arms of their parents and their family members. Japan will face up to North Korea's nuclear and missile threat through the Japan-United States alliance and through Japan, the United States and the Republic of Korea acting in unity. We consistently support the stance of the United States that all options are on the table.

Also, I appreciate the Security Council's unanimous adoption, on 11 September, of resolution 2375 (2017), which imposes strict sanctions against North Korea. That clarified our intention to further intensify pressure on North Korea in order to force it to undertake a fundamental change in its path forward. But I must make an appeal to the General Assembly. North Korea has already demonstrated its disregard of the resolution by launching yet another missile.

The resolution is nothing more than the beginning. We must prevent the goods, funds, people, and technology necessary for nuclear and missile development from heading to North Korea. We must make North Korea comply fully with the repeated resolutions. We must

ensure the strict and full implementation of the series of Security Council resolutions by all United Nations States Members. What is necessary is action. Whether or not we can put an end to the provocations by North Korea is dependent upon the solidarity of the international community. There is not much time left.

North Korea is in a truly fortunate location, adjoining the growth region of Asia and the Pacific. It has an industrious labour force as well as underground resources. If it were to make use of those, there could be a path for North Korea to dramatically grow its economy and improve public welfare. That is where North Korea's bright future lies. By failing to resolve the abduction, nuclear weapon and missile issues and by becoming a threat to all humankind, there is absolutely no future that North Korea can open up for itself. In order to change North Korea's policies, we must strengthen our unity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. António Luís Santos da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal.

Mr. António Luís Santos da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. António Luís Santos da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic ofPortugal, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Da Costa (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Let me start by expressing Portugal's condolences to and solidarity with the people and the Government of Mexico for yesterday's violent tragedy.

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. I welcome the priorities that you have established. Portugal fully supports an agenda centred around people and the right that we all have to live a dignified life in peace on a sustainable planet. I also wish to express a word of appreciation to your predecessor, whose dedication and successes we most readily acknowledge.

I feel deeply moved to address the peoples' Assembly today in the presence of the first Portuguese Secretary-General of the United Nations. Before the Assembly, I solemnly pledge Portugal's commitment to the United Nations and multilateralism, founded on the primacy of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The priorities of the Secretary-General are the same as ours: for a United Nations that is stronger, offers greater solidarity and is capable of preventing conflicts, alleviating human suffering and promoting peace and prosperity — a more transparent United Nations that is more effective and more adaptable to a constantly changing world. We welcome and support the dynamism that he has shown right from the start of his mandate in reforming the United Nations system so that it may better fulfil its noble purpose. Only the United Nations holds a universal vocation to respond, in concert with Member States, to the increasingly complex challenges of our time.

Reforming the peace and security architecture is an absolute priority. Consolidating a culture of conflict prevention requires action across the board and an integrated vision of the three pillars of the United Nations system — peace, human rights and sustainable development — as well as closer institutional cooperation among the principal organs of the Charter, particularly the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Achieving sustainable peace will require greater synergies in the Organization's structures and missions on the ground. The ongoing efforts should also give fresh impetus to reform of the Security Council to ensure better representation of today's world. The African continent c: nnot be denied a permanent presence, while Brazil and India are also two inescapable examples of necessart representation.

On the other hand, the complexity of the global problems we face requires us to foster partnerships, involving not only States but also civil societies, international financial institutions and public and private entities. In that connection, I recall resolution 71/324, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, adopted a few days ago, which specifically aims to

strengthen the complementarities between the two organizations.

I would also like to underscore the importance of the Portuguese language, which is today an instrument of communication with a global dimension. By the middle of this century, there will be almost 400 million speakers of the Portuguese language. That is what justified its adoption as an official language in several international organizations. The acceptance of Portuguese as one of the official languages of the United Nations remains a common stance of the member States of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

The Secretary-General has chosen diplomacy for peace as one of the main flags of his mandate. This idea must guide us as an international community as we react to the conflicts and crises that regrettably occur today in various parts of the world. The unity and firmness of the international community, embodied in the United Nations, in defence of law and in the promotion of security and stability is what enables us to move towards a fairer international order and to find the best solutions to the serious crises we face today — from North Korean threats to the situation in Syria, from the instability in Libya to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and so many other sources of confrontation, security risks or humanitarian tragedy.

Terrorism is a global threat that challenges all of us. Portugal strongly and unequivocally condemns all acts of terrorism and emphasizes the importance of preventing and fighting radicalization, violent extremism and recruitment. It actively participates in the struggle against terrorism, notably within the framework of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We welcome the military successes achieved in Iraq over the past year.

We all know that promoting peace and security goes hand in hand with promoting development. The two dimensions complement and strengthen each other. For that reason, diplomatic mediation efforts and peace operations in conflict zones also require humanitarian support, development cooperation and institutional capacity-building for affected populations and States.

One of the clearest priorities of Portuguese foreign policy is participation in peacekeeping operations and institution-building within the framework of the United Nations. As a European and Atlantic country with deep historical and cultural links to Africa, Portugal pays particular attention to partnerships between the two continents.

The first Summit between Europe and Africa took place in 2000, under the Portuguese presidency of the European Union. The fifth European Union-African Union Summit, to be held in Abidjan in November, will be an excellent opportunity to better define the priorities of the strategic partnership between the European Union and the African continent. The chosen theme — Youth — allows a much-needed integrated approach that addresses issues of education and employment, demographic dynamics and economic growth, gender equality and civic participation.

The African continent has made important progress in recent years. We welcome the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. There are many signs of hope, both politically and economically. The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be another important step in that sense.

However, several disturbing issues still need to be overcome, and Portugal strives to do its part. First, we participate in various peacekeeping and stabilization operations within the framework of the United Nations and the European Union. In that way, we have reinforced our presence, without ever restricting the use of our troops, in the multilateral missions in the Sahel and Central Africa region, namely, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Missions in Mali and in the Central African Republic. Secondly, Portugal cooperates with several African partners in promoting maritime security, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea, to combat piracy and trafficking in people, drugs and weapons and to protect international trade from a strategic point of view for both Africa and Europe.

Peace and sustainable development are built on respect for the rights and dignity of human beings. Portugal defends human rights diplomacy. For us, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are inseparable and interdependent. They apply universally and do not depend on place, history or the religious or civilizational matrix of a society. Upholding those rights is a task for all of us, one which requires dialogue and concerted action. That is the only way human rights will be made universal. Our mandate in the Human Rights Council, which ends this year, was guided by

those principles, and they will continue to guide us in the future.

In 2017, we celebrate 150 years since the abolition of the death penalty in Portugal. We have been pioneers in that cause and will continue to stand for the universal abolition of capital punishment.

The situation of migrants and refugees remains on the agenda. We have a moral obligation to protect and promote the rights of those who, like so many others before them, are forced to leave their homes and families in search of security and a better future. That is the principle that should serve as the basis for the global compact that last year we pledged to prepare and approve.

In that context, I underline the work of the Global Platform for Syrian Students, an initiative of the former President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio. The Platform guarantees access to higher education for young Syrians who, because of the conflict in their country, have been deprived of that universal right. I invite all countries that have not yet done so to join the Platform and support the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies. The war cannot lead to the loss of yet another generation of Syrian youth, who have the right to education.

For peace and development to be truly sustainable, we must show respect for our common home and future generations. To protect and preserve the planet is to nurture peace and prevent new conflicts that are caused by competition in accessing diminishing resources. In that regard, the Paris Agreement is a milestone in reducing the impacts of climate change. We cannot do without the universal instrument if we are to achieve the objectives of the environmental pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Portugal will comply with the European Union's voluntary commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030, as compared to 1990 levels, and will contribute to the Green Climate Fund, which is in place to help developing countries adapt to climate change.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are the most powerful statement of our multilateral commitment to the rights of people, the quality of life of populations and the future of our planet. Portugal stands for those Goals, which guide us both in our domestic policy and in our foreign and cooperation efforts. All 17 Goals are very important to us. However, because of our history and the international action on the preservation and enhancement of marine resources, we believe that Goal 14, on oceans, is the one to which our participation can bring greater added value, within the framework of the United Nations.

Oceans — source of life, knowledge and so many resources and exchanges — make up 71 per cent of the surface of our planet and are a top priority in any strategy for sustainable development. The need for action is pressing and wide-ranging, as was evident a week ago in Lisbon in another oceans meeting, this year dedicated to the theme "The Ocean and Human Health". It was promoted by Portugal, and dozens of countries participated.

In 2017, the first United Nations conference dedicated to conservation and sustainable exploitation of the oceans took place. It was a privilege for Portugal to participate in the preparatory process for the conference as co-facilitator, along with Singapore, of the political document that resulted from it: "Our ocean, our future: call for action". I reiterate my country's willingness to host the follow-up conference in 2020.

In our view, the sustainability of oceans requires a strengthening of their governance. For that reason, we believe that the General Assembly should formally decide on the beginning of negotiations, starting in 2018, of a new legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

However many the challenges we face today and however serious the risks and threats that afflict us, we are certain to make progress when we have clear goals and know how to establish partnerships to reach them. Multilateralism is the only framework for the defence of the common good of humankind and the collective promotion of peace, security and development. In no way does multilateralism diminish the sovereignty of nations or the capacity for decisions of peoples and institutions. The fraternal cooperation promoted by multilateralism contributes to our strengths with the strengths of those who follow the same path and direction.

We know the way and direction to take. Our way is that of the United Nations and our direction is the agenda of the United Nations. Diplomacy for peace, diplomacy for human rights, the climate agenda, the 2030 Agenda — my country is part of and contributes

to all of them for the sake of humanity, which is our common condition.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. António Luís Santos da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. May (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by expressing my sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Mexico following the devastating earthquake. I also want to reiterate my sympathies to those affected by the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean. Our thoughts are with them all at this time.

As we meet at the General Assembly, we face challenges that go right to the heart of who we are as nations — challenges that test our values, our vision and our resolve to defend the rules and standards that underpin the security and prosperity of our fellow citizens. As I argued in my speech here last year (see A/71/PV.8), many of those challenges do not recognize or respect geographical boundaries.

I think, of course, of the terrorism that has struck so many of our countries — including my own, five times this year —and, fuelling that terrorist threat, of the increasing numbers being drawn to extremist ideologies, not only in places riven by conflict and instability but many online in their homes, thousands of miles away from those conflicts. I think of climate change, which is depleting and degrading the planet we leave to our children. And I think of the vast challenges that come from the mass displacement of people. Many are refugees fleeing conflict and persecution. Others are economic migrants prepared to risk everything on perilous sea crossings in the desperate search for a better life for themselves and their children.

Through that migration we also see the challenges of economic inequality, between countries and within them. That inequality, together with weaknesses in the global trading system, threatens to undermine support for the forces of liberalism and free trade that have done so much to propel global growth, and it is pushing some countries towards protectionism in the belief that that best defends the interests of their own people.

As the global system struggles to adapt, we are confronted by States deliberately flouting, for their own gain, the rules and standards that have secured our collective prosperity and security — the unforgivable use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its own people and, perhaps foremost in our minds today, the outrageous proliferation of nuclear weapons by North Korea and a threat to use them.

I believe that the only way for us to respond to that vast array of challenges is to come together and defend the international order that we have worked so hard to create and the values by which we stand. For it is the fundamental values that we share, values of fairness, justice and human rights, that have created the common cause among nations to act together in our shared interests and form the multilateral system. It is that rules-based system that we have developed — including the institutions, the international frameworks of free and fair trade, agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, and laws and conventions like the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — that enables a global cooperation through which we can protect those values.

Indeed, the defining purposes set out in the Charter of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation in solving the problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character, and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of those common ends. I do not see those as vaunted ideals to be held to their own sake. Those values and the rules they imbue are central to our national interest, to our security and prosperity. The international system, with the United Nations at its heart, is the amplifying force that enables countries to cooperate and live up to those

standards in word, spirit and deed, to our collective and individual benefit.

If the system we have created is found no longer to be capable of meeting the challenges of our time, then there will be a crisis of faith in multilateralism and global cooperation that will damage the interests of all our peoples. Those of us who hold true to our shared values, who hold true to that desire to defend the rules and high standards that have shaped and protected the world we live in, need to strive harder than ever to show that institutions like the United Nations can work for the countries that formed them and for the people who we represent.

That means reforming the United Nations and the wider international system so it can prove its worth in helping us to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It also means ensuring that those who flout the rules and spirit of our international system are held to account, that nations honour their responsibilities and play their part in upholding and renewing a rules-based international order that can deliver prosperity and security for us all.

First, we must insure that our multilateral institutions can deliver the aspirations on which they were founded. Think of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees looking after those who have been driven out of their homes; the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons striving for a world free of chemical weapons; the United Nations Children's Fund helping children in danger. Those are all vital missions where the United Nations surely has a unique role to play. That is why the United Kingdom has over 70 years been such a pioneering supporter of those organizations, and more.

But we should also acknowledge that throughout its history the United Nations has suffered from a seemingly unbridgeable gap between the nobility of its purposes and the effectiveness of its delivery. When the need for multilateral action has never been greater, the shortcomings of the United Nations and its institutions risk undermining the confidence of States as Members and donors. Even more important, they risk the confidence and faith of those who rely on the Blue Helmets, who rely on that sign I stand in front of today to come to their aid in the darkest of hours.

We must begin by supporting the ambitious reform agenda that Secretary-General Guterres is now leading to create a more agile, transparent and joined-up Organization. Much of the work will be practical and unglamorous. It will require the United Nations to deliver better cooperation on the ground between agencies, remove competition for funding and improve gender equality. But it will also require real leadership to confront damaging issues that have beset the United Nations. I therefore welcome the Secretary-General's new circle of leadership on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, and I am pleased to be part of that initiative.

We, the nations of the United Nations, need to give the Secretary-General our backing for those reforms. As an outward-looking, global Britain and the second-biggest funder of the United Nations, the United Kingdom will remain committed to spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on development and humanitarian support. We will use our military to support peacekeeping, and our diplomats will continue to work to tackle conflict and to support peacebuilding. In turn, the United Nations and its agencies must win our trust by proving to us and the people we represent that they can deliver. That is why we will remain generous in our funding but will set aside 30 per cent to be paid only to those parts of the United Nations that achieve sufficient results.

But this is about more than technical reforms, important as they are. It is also about reforms that enable the United Nations to truly respond to the global challenges of the twenty-first century. At last year's General Assembly we undertook to do far more to resolve the challenges of refugee and migration flows. We agreed to develop global compacts to address the causes and the consequences of the mass movements of people we see today. That was an important step to elevate significantly our global response and enable us collectively to tackle this challenge of our times.

In the year ahead, as well as agreeing the principles of those compacts, we must ensure they can be applied in practice. We must do more to identify, protect and support refugees and those hosting them near conflicts. On migration, our starting point must be that it can benefit both countries and migrants themselves, but only when it is safe, orderly, well managed and legal. If we do not manage that effectively, we will fail both our own citizens and those taking those dangerous journeys, and we will push more people into the curse of modern slavery at the hands of the human traffickers and organized criminal groups that drive that inhuman industry.

But the steps we are agreeing through these compacts alone will not be enough. For if people cannot find jobs, opportunity and hope for themselves and their families where they live, they will continue to look elsewhere. As the United Nations and as Members, we must work harder to combine the efforts of our development programmes with the private sector and the international financial institutions to support the creation of jobs and livelihoods that will address not just the consequences but the causes of this great challenge of our time. The truth is that, despite our best efforts, we are not succeeding. We must do more.

The same is true with terrorism, where again, the challenges we face today are vastly different from those of previous eras. When terrorists struck London and Manchester this year the world saw our cities come together in defiance. Our Parliament carries on. Ariana Grande came back to Manchester and sang again. London Bridge is bustling with people. Our communities came together at the Finsbury Park mosque in North London, and Londoners got back on the Tube. The terrorists did not win, for we will never let anyone destroy our way of life.

But defiance alone is not enough. As leaders, we have all visited too many hospitals and seen too many innocent people murdered in our countries. In the past decade, hundreds of thousands have been killed by terrorists across the world. That is a truly global tragedy that is increasingly touching the lives of us all. This year is the tenth anniversary of the death of the woman who introduced me to my husband and who was known well to many of us in the United Nations. Benazir Bhutto was brutally murdered by people who actively rejected the values that all of us here in the United Nations stand for, in a country that has suffered more than most at the hands of terrorists. She was murdered for standing up for democracy, murdered for espousing tolerance and murdered for being a woman.

When I think of the hundreds of thousands of victims of terrorism in countries across the world, I think of their friends, their families, their communities, devastated by that evil, and I say, enough is enough. Of course, we must continue to take the fight to these terrorist groups on the battlefield. The United Kingdom will remain at the forefront of that effort, while also helping to build the capabilities of our alliances and our partners to better take on this challenge.

We must also step up our efforts as never before to tackle the terrorist use of the Internet, for as the threat from terrorists evolves, so must our cooperation. That is why today, for the first time in the United Nations, Governments and industry through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism will be coming together to do just that. Tech companies have made significant progress on that issue, but we need to go further and faster to reduce the time it takes to remove terrorist content online and to increase significantly their efforts to stop it being uploaded in the first place. That is a major step in reclaiming the Internet from those who would use it to do us harm.

But ultimately it is not just the terrorists themselves who we need to defeat, it is the extremist ideologies that fuel them. It is the ideologies that preach hatred, sow division and undermine our common humanity. We must be far more robust in identifying those ideologies and defeating them across all parts of our societies. As I said in the aftermath of the attack on London Bridge this summer, we have to face the fact that this will require some difficult conversations. We all need to come together, to take on that extremism that lives among us and to nurture the common values that must ultimately win out. They are the values of the United Nations.

And yet, despite our best efforts, we as nations and as a United Nations have not found the ways or the means to truly take on that threat. That is why today, as I talk about United Nations reform, I ask the Secretary-General to make the fight against terrorists and the ideologies that drive them a core part of his agenda, at the heart of our development, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention work. To give that effort the prominence it surely requires, I am calling on the Secretary-General to make that a theme of next year's General Assembly and use it to harness the efforts of Governments, the private sector and civil society so that we can truly strike the generational blow against that vile evil in our world.

As we do so, we must clearly strike the balance between protecting our people and protecting their freedoms. We must always guard against those who would use the fight against terrorism as a cover for oppression and the violation of human rights. As we look at the situation in northern Burma, I call on the Burmese authorities to put an end to the violence, allow humanitarian access and fully implement the

recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

By reforming our multinational institutions, we can strengthen their ability to deliver for the people we serve, protect the vulnerable and fight injustice. We can enable multilateralism to multiply the effect of our individual commitments through its convening power and spending power, through the economies of scale it can bring, the standards it can set, the moral leadership it can harness and the legitimacy it can confer. But multilateralism can only reflect the values that individual States project and can only multiply the commitments that they are prepared to make. It is strong nations that form strong institutions and that provide the basis of the international partnerships and cooperation that brings stability to our world.

It falls to us all to decide whether we will honour the responsibilities that we have to one another. I have talked about the role of the United Nations in stepping up on counter-terrorism. But that is an area that we as States have critical responsibilities that the United Nations cannot itself address alone, for it is inescapable that the terrorism, conflict and instability that we see across the world are in many cases driven by the actions of States acting through proxies.

When countries back groups like Hizbullah to increase instability and conflict across the Middle East, support so-called separatists in Ukraine to create instability on Europe's eastern borders, or give tacit support to criminal groups launching cyberattacks against our countries and institutions, they call into question the very rules and the international system that protect us. That is why, both globally but also in our own continent of Europe, the United Kingdom will remain steadfast in our commitment and responsibility to ensure the security and stability of our friends and allies as we have done for generations.

Just as it the responsibility of nations not to seek to advance their interests through terrorist or proxy groups, so it is also the responsibility of each of us to act together in the face of the most egregious violations of our common rules and standards. Clearly, responsibility for the chaos and tragedy that we see in Syria lies firmly at the door of Al-Assad. He and his backers have continually frustrated the efforts of the United Nations to act as the broker of peace through the Geneva process. As responsible States, we must not abandon our support for the United Nations attempts to secure peace and stability in Syria. Indeed, we must continue to call on all those with influence on the regime to bring them to the table.

But in recent weeks, the United Nations has also confirmed what we all knew, namely, that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons on its own people. In the face of that fact, we have a responsibility to stand up, to hold the Syrian regime to account. That responsibility sits with us all, but a particular, special responsibility lies on the shoulders of the permanent members of the Security Council. As one of those five members, the United Kingdom takes our special responsibility seriously.

I am proud that we have used the full weight of our diplomacy to ensure that we have not had to exercise our veto in a generation. We seek to foster international cooperation, not frustrate it. But others have not done so. One country in particular has used its veto as many times in the past five years as in the whole of the second half of the Cold War. In doing so they have prevented action against a despicable regime that has murdered its own people with chemical weapons. As a result, in Syria, the United Nations has been blocked. That has undermined the values that we hold dear and the international rules-based system that is the basis of security and prosperity around the world.

Now we face an even more immediate, global danger in the activities of Kim Jong Un and his regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Time after time, he has shown contempt for the international community of law-abiding States, contempt for his neighbours and contempt for the institutions and rules that have preserved peace and security. On that challenge, the United Nations in recent weeks has shown it can step up to the task, with last Monday's Security Council resolution creating the biggest sanctions package of the twenty-first century. We have seen regional and global Powers coming together and, as in the founding Charter, putting aside limited self-interests to show leadership on behalf of the wider world.

But despite those efforts, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to defy and provoke the international community and threaten its neighbours. Unless all Security Council members continue to live up to the special responsibilities that are placed upon us and, in seeking to resolve that crisis, to be prepared to

take on necessary measures to tackle that threat, we will not be able to bring stability to the Korean peninsula.

As the world looks on, I am calling for further steps and for nations with that special responsibility to work together and exert the pressure we know is necessary to force Kim Jong Un to change his ways. Let us not fail this time. Let our message to North Korea be clear: our determination to uphold those rules is stronger by far than their determination to undermine them.

Throughout the history of the United Nations, countries have shown time and time again that by being true to our values, rules and standards, it is possible to come together and to deliver in ways that have the most extraordinary impact on the lives of the people we serve. I believe we can do so again. We must do so again, and we will do so again.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Paolo Gentiloni Silveri, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Paolo Gentiloni Silveri, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Paolo Gentiloni Silveri, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Gentiloni Silveri (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): I cannot begin my statement without sparing a thought for a friendly country, Mexico, struck by a grave natural disaster. We express our solidarity with the families of the victims and our encouragement to the relief workers.

The seventy-second session of the General Assembly is taking place in a complex and constantly moving global context. The socioeconomic effects of globalization, which can create hardship and inequalities, also compound the persistence of major instability in the international geopolitical framework. The world seems more and more unpredictable, especially when it must address extraordinary challenges.

The international community must find a way to overcome those obstacles and look to the future with confidence. There is hope to be found in the signs of optimism that accompany the recovery of our economies. It is up to us to navigate this road to development with responsibility and courage. We must do so first through better governance of global processes to assure robust and inclusive economic growth aimed primarily at reducing inequalities. Italy is convinced that building democratic, pluralistic and inclusive societies that are open to diversity represents not only an ethical imperative but also the best guarantee of peace and stability. This is a fundamental part of a broader commitment to promoting and guaranteeing effective protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of each individual.

The shared journey of hopes and gains undertaken by the European Union — which for Italy represents the first natural dimension of multilateralism — teaches us that we must have the courage to react to the challenges we face daily. In the past two years the European Union has been forced, perhaps for the first time, to abandon its "climate-controlled" environment — perhaps with difficulty — in order to tackle some of the greatest challenges to have emerged since the post-war period. It has not been easy, nor has it been the beginning of the end, which many had feared, but rather an opportunity for a powerful collective reminder of the need to remain united within the European project.

Today I affirm with profound conviction that a new European impetus exists, which Italy not only shares but actively promotes. There is a will to proceed as one to bring the European project closer to the needs of citizens, the challenges of economic growth, security, and migration. It is a project that strengthens the greatly needed global role of the Union in the world, inspired by multilateralism, free exchange and respect for rule of law.

In short, this story concerns us all, because a European Union that can once again give the whole world an example of solidarity, progress, prosperity and effectiveness is a contribution to the progress and development of the whole world. For Italy,

the development of social, economic and political inclusiveness, extended also to the labour market, as well as fighting poverty and marginalization, means contributing to a more effective management of the challenge of migration. We must respond with compassion, intelligence and vision to the permanent reality of the vast human movements of our time.

For years, Italy has been engaged in operations to rescue and receive migrants. We have saved and continue to save hundreds of thousands of persons who risked drowning in the Mediterranean, true to our ethical and moral imperatives and to the international obligations we have freely undersigned. We are proud of this, but to consolidate our action we need a general, global response to the migration phenomenon. It cannot rely solely upon the generosity of some territories, in the knowledge that there are nations in the world that are struck by migratory flows on an even larger and more serious scale than Italy.

To continue to affirm and embody the principle of shared and proportionate responsibility, Italy is participating actively in the negotiations that will lead to the adoption of global compacts in the United Nations framework. Our proposal to jointly address the migration phenomenon on a global level is based on three main pillars: investing in support of the countries of origin and transit, protecting the most vulnerable refugees and migrants, and valuing the many positive aspects and opportunities created by migration.

Italy is already the promoter of a true partnership with the African countries. As I have already had occasion to express and repeat today with conviction, the future of Europe is in Africa. It is by investing in Africa that we can address the deep causes of migration, first and foremost economic and demographic inequalities.

We are working with the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide assistance to migrants with respect for their human rights, assure the protection of refugees fleeing from wars and persecution and offer favourable conditions and incentives for their voluntary repatriation. Reducing the power of human traffickers is the only way to create progress for legal migration, which is also to the benefit of our countries and does not jeopardize the lives of migrants. To protect those who are weakest is to protect our values. Saving the lives of children allows us to save our societies, our honour and our future.

For Italy, by virtue of our geography and history, our emphasis on responsible and solidary management of the movement of persons is coupled with an emphasis on the security, stability, sustainable development and growth of the Mediterranean and of the African continent as a whole. It is all included in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. We know that the ever-increasing apparent loss of territory for Da'esh in Iraq and Syria has demonstrated the effectiveness of our work but we also know that victory on the ground is not enough. The fanaticism and ideology of Da'esh and of Jihad continue to claim victims and sow terror in our cities and in half of the cities around the world.

Italy is an active partner in the Global Coalition against Da'esh and is engaged in various activities, starting with the presence of its soldiers in Iraq and the second-largest contingent of the Coalition, after the American contingent. Nonetheless, it is because we are engaged with our military forces that we recall that the fight against terrorism requires a multidimensional force. I would mention initiatives such as countering the use of the Internet and social media by terrorists — which we will address here at the United Nations — and the financing of terrorist groups. I would also point to the investments that we must make to promote culture and inclusiveness in our regions and in the neighbourhoods of our cities.

We have devoted great energy in the Security Council, the General Assembly and as the Chair of the Group of Seven (G-7) to upgrade our capacity to respond to the new threats posed by terrorist groups, which are ever-evolving. Libya is the key to restoring to the central Mediterranean its historic role as a driver of civilization, and to countering the risks and threats. As we stated earlier today, its stabilization is a priority objective that must reject every unrealistic hypothesis of a military solution or division of the country.

Italy is a leader in that commitment, and we welcome the fact that the United Nations has returned to action as a leader in Libya at the political level and at the level of providing assistance to refugees and migrants. We have an opportunity to restart the political process and prepare for upcoming elections. We have that opportunity today. It is in our hands and in the hands of the United Nations.

Syria continues to be a source of concern and suffering. Let us not forget that. After six years of unspeakable violence, millions of refugees and hundreds

of thousands of deaths, we welcome the recent efforts to promote local truces in the de-escalation zones. Let us also remember that the only road to a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict is a realistic and credible political process.

There can be no stability, peace or reconstruction, or lasting victory over terrorism, or conditions for the voluntary return of refugees in complete security without an inclusive political transition that brings together the various components of Syrian society. That is why I would like to reaffirm today at the General Assembly our full support for the role of the United Nations and of Special Envoy De Mistura, and, at the same time, urge the main regional and international stakeholders to support the road map outlined in Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). Finally, ultimately, there could be no true peace without justice. That means ascertaining who was responsible for committing atrocity crimes over the years, which began with the use of chemical weapons.

Dialogue and reconciliation are also indispensable instruments for lasting peace on the African continent. Italy has intensified and systematized just actions for the Sahel region, in particular for the Niger, Chad and Mali, which are working with immense difficulty to fight terrorist and criminal organizations and the illegal trafficking activities linked to them, starting with the heinous trafficking in persons. In that context, we are convinced that the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) initiative is essential and we welcomed the decision of the G-5 Sahel countries to launch, with the support of the African Union, a joint force. Italy continues to assure maximum support for the Horn of Africa — the key to stability for the entire region and to resolving a complex crisis aggravated by climate change, which has led to a devastating drought.

Initiatives in Somalia are moving in the right direction. Italy will continue to support them, given our ancient links to that country.

I would be remiss if I did not mention our deep concern about the very serious situation in Venezuela. It is a situation that has turned a rich and prosperous country into a land of crises and suffering. Italy reiterates its call for an immediate and good-faith dialogue, which cannot disregard the four conditions on the table, namely, authorization to send international assistance, a clearly established electoral calendar, the restoration of the Parliament's powers and the release of all political prisoners.

Finally, we look upon the situation on the Korean peninsula with great anguish and distress, in the face of repeated violations of pertinent Security Council resolutions. It is fundamental for the international community to remain unified and determined in its response and it is in that spirit that, as president of the G-7, Italy promoted a firm group declaration. It is crucial to ensure the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions. Every now and then, someone wonders about the usefulness of the United Nations and about the many things happening in the world, but the resolutions that we have unanimously adopted in recent weeks as instruments to exert pressure on the dictator of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a positive result for the United Nations. They demonstrate that we are ready to cooperate with our partners to continue to put the much needed diplomatic and economic pressure on the regime.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear issue, we believe that the international community should ensure that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains a positive factor in the global efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, we are convinced of the importance of the full and comprehensive implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

Autocratic regimes, terrorism and international environmental crises pose a grave threat to the planet. But we, the United Nations, cannot and will not give up this fight. The Secretary-General has made prevention one of his highest priorities, and Italy supports him in that commitment. We need to prevent conflict and natural disasters and the humanitarian and migration crises that follow, which, in turn, cause further instability. Prevention means everything except building barriers. It means instead achieving inclusive and sustainable development and addressing crises with multilateral efforts. We cannot face those threats alone. The response must be a joint response. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlines with clear-sighted ambition a shared path forward. Together, we have written the prescription — now we must follow through.

Climate change calls for the same dedicated effort. Secretary-General Guterres pointed that out a few days ago when he said that, if we do not address climate

change now, we will ruin many of our grandchildren's opportunities for a positive and dignified life. We are facing an emergency, the social consequences of which do not need to projected onto the future. They are already tragically apparent. We need only think of the more than 200 million displaced persons who, from 2008 to 2015, were forced to leave their homes due to the devastating effects of climate phenomena.

The crises and the challenges of our time can be overcome, and those of the future can be prevented. It depends on us, the United Nations. We need a United Nations that is more effective in enacting the inspirational principles that continue to be valid after so many years. We count, too, on the leadership of the Secretary-General. We fully support his reform plans, including his commitment to empowering women and girls and the achievement of gender equality as a tool for bolstering the efficiency of the Organization.

That revitalization also obviously includes the reform of the Security Council to render it more democratic, effective and representative of the entire membership of the United Nations — because, just as the membership has evolved and expanded since its establishment, the same must occur in the primary organ that is its centre of responsibility.

The current global scenario calls upon us to respond to many challenges that demonstrate that history did not end a quarter of a century ago, as some had believed. We are called upon to constantly renew our endorsement of the values of peace, human rights, democracy and freedom. In other more difficult times of our history, we have seen those values retreat, but we know that even in the most difficult times, democracy can renew itself and grow and, in the end, can prevail.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.